

## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

7

AD-A210 572

## 1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS

None

FILE 1

## 3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT

Approved for public release.  
Distribution unlimited.

## 4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)

TECHNICAL REPORT #7

## 5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)

## 6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

University of Massachusetts

6b. OFFICE SYMBOL  
(If applicable)

## 7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION

Office of Naval Research

## 6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)

Department of Chemistry  
Lederle Graduate Research Tower  
Amherst, MA 01003

## 7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)

800 N. Quincy Street  
Arlington VA 22217-5000

## 8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

Office of Naval Research

8b. OFFICE SYMBOL  
(If applicable)

## 9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

## 8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)

800 N. Quincy Street  
Arlington VA 22217-5000

## 10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS

PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
N00014-87	K-0464		

## 11. TITLE (Include Security Classification)

CONVENIENT UNIMOLECULAR SOURCES OF ARYLOXYL RADICALS. I -- ARYLOXYLOXALYL CHLORIDES.  
(unclassified)

## 12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S)

David A. Modarelli, Frank C. Rossitto, Paul M. Lahti

## 13a. TYPE OF REPORT

Preprint

## 13b. TIME COVERED

FROM 9-30-88 TO 5-30-89

## 14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day)

1989 May 30

## 15. PAGE COUNT

4

## 16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION

Submitted for publication in Tetrahedron Letters.

## 17. COSATI CODES

FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP

## 18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)

Phenoxy radical generation by photochemical methods  
Labile oxalyl derivatives.

## 19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)

UV photolysis of readily synthesized aryloxyoxalyl chloride half-esters provides a new unimolecular source of aryloxy radicals. Evidence for efficacy of the method is provided by UV and ESR spectroscopy. ESR spectra of known radicals are compared to spectra generated by our methods with excellent correlation.

**DTIC**  
**ELECTE**  
JUL 27 1989  
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## 20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT

 UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED  SAME AS RPT.  DTIC USERS

## 21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Non-classified

## 22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL

Dr. Kenneth Wynne, Acting Director, Chemistry

## 22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code)

## 22c. OFFICE SYMBOL

OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH  
Contract # N00014-87-K-0464  
R&T Code 413c037  
Technical Report #7

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I -- ARYLOXYOXALYL CHLORIDES

by

D. A. Modarelli, F. C. Rossitto, P. M. Lahti

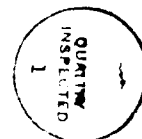
Prepared for  
Publication in  
Tetrahedron Letters

University of Massachusetts  
Department of Chemistry  
Amherst, MA 01003

Submitted 12 May, 1988

Processing stamp with fields for: Received, Date, Time, Initials. A checkmark is present in the Date field. The initials 'A-1' are handwritten at the bottom left of the stamp area.

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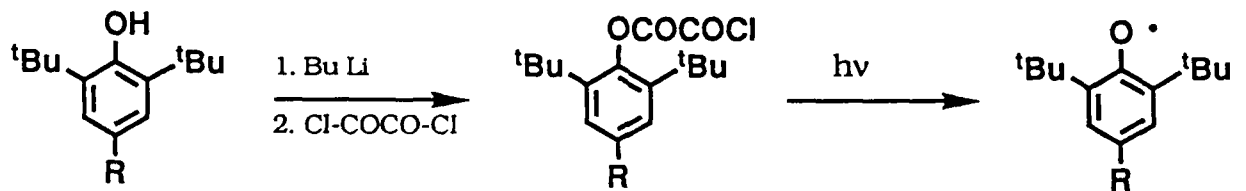
Department of Chemistry, Lederle Graduate Research Tower,  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003

*Abstract:* UV photolysis of readily synthesized aryloxyoxalyl chloride half-esters provides a new unimolecular source of aryloxy radicals, as shown by ESR and UV-vis spectroscopy.

Although phenoxy radicals have been generated and investigated for a long time, such studies have usually been carried out under solution phase bimolecular oxidative conditions, or by direct photolysis of phenols. <sup>1</sup> We have recently had the occasion to desire a method for efficient unimolecular photochemical generation of phenoxy and related aryloxy radicals, and have found that aryloxyoxalyl chloride half-esters provide a readily available photochemical source of aryloxy radicals. *SYNTHESIS (CHEMISTRY). JET 15*

Platz and coworkers have recently shown <sup>2</sup> that halogen substituted molecules can be convenient photochemical sources of some diradicals. Although in this method, a photochemical electron donor is usually required to cause loss of atomic chlorine and desired generation of radical centers, we felt that, by analogy, aryloxyoxalyl chlorides (AOC's) might undergo photolysis, presumably with production of the desired aryloxy radicals, atomic chlorine, and two molecules of carbon monoxide.

Phenols 1-4 <sup>3</sup> were deprotonated using butyl lithium/hexanes and allowed to react with excess recently distilled oxalyl chloride. Removal of excess oxalyl chloride *in vacuo* followed by low temperature recrystallization in



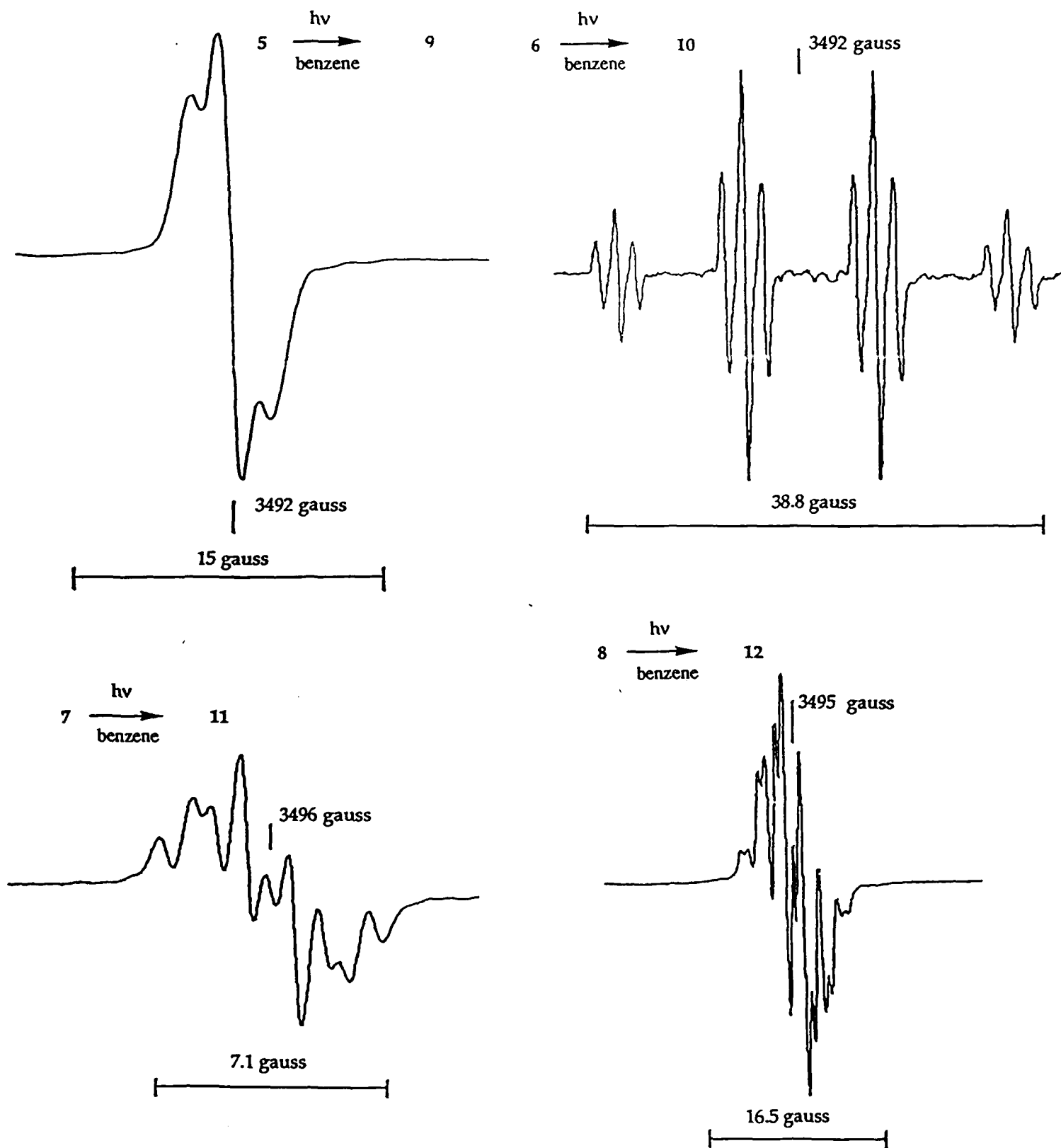
- 1 R = <sup>t</sup>Bu  
2 CH<sub>3</sub>  
3 OCH<sub>3</sub>  
4 C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>

- 5 R = <sup>t</sup>Bu  
6 CH<sub>3</sub>  
7 OCH<sub>3</sub>  
8 C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>

- 9 R = <sup>t</sup>Bu  
10 CH<sub>3</sub>  
11 OCH<sub>3</sub>  
12 C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>

pentane to give product AOC's 5-8. <sup>4</sup> Although sensitive to atmospheric water, these molecules appear to be reasonably stable at room temperature, and may be stored at -20°C under nitrogen for up to a month.

Figure 1: ESR Spectra of Phenoxy Radicals Generated by Photolysis of AOC's 5-8.



All spectra obtained in degassed benzene solution at room temperature at 9.79 GHz, after irradiation for 5-20 min with a 1000W Xenon arc lamp (Kratos). Midfields of each transition, and spectral width scales are indicated in each spectrum in gauss. Spectra were persistent for days under these conditions.

Upon photochemical irradiation of the samples (oxygen-free benzene, 1000 W Xenon arc lamp), strong, persistent ESR signals were observed, as well as color changes in the samples. Figure 1 (see preceding page) shows typical ESR spectra obtained under these conditions, which are clearly due to the formation of sterically blocked stabilized radicals 9-12, as confirmed by comparison to ESR and UV-vis spectra generated by basic  $K_3Fe(CN)_6$  oxidation of 1-4.<sup>5</sup> The ESR spectra from our photochemical method were strong and remarkably free of obvious radical impurities, indicating the overall efficacy of the method.

Presumably photolysis causes initial cleavage of the C-Cl bond in the AOC's, followed by rapid loss of two molecules of carbon monoxide, a thermodynamically strong driving force that favors formation of the aryloxy radicals. The final fate of atomic chlorine is not experimentally clear at this point, but it is notable that the ESR spectra of photolyzed AOC's are so free of impurities. In the photolysis of AOC 6, for instance, atomic chlorine could potentially abstract a hydrogen atom from the *para*-methyl group, giving a benzyl radical that could be seen in the ESR. As the appropriate spectrum in Figure 1 shows, either this process does not occur, or such a resultant benzyl radical is too short-lived to be seen in our ESR experiments, since only the observed peaks are attributable to radical 10 (see however the accompanying paper).

Our photochemical method also works effectively under rigid matrix conditions, unlike previous solution oxidation methods. Photolysis of the AOC's at 77K in frozen benzene polycrystalline matrices gives ESR active samples that may be thawed to yield the very same ESR and UV-vis spectra<sup>6</sup> that are produced by simple solution phase photolysis, confirming the spectral assignments. Similar results are observed using frozen glassy matrices (methylcyclohexane, decahydronaphthalene, 2-methyltetrahydrofuran).

Besides tests of overall efficiency, a number of outgrowths and variations of this method may be easily envisioned. In addition to the well-known phenoxy radical systems generated to test this method, a variety of previously unexamined phenoxy radical species is under investigation in our group, using the synthetic techniques in this and the following paper under rigid matrix conditions and making characterization of these species possible without steric blocking of the oxyl radical center. In addition, other radicals may perhaps be generated by related chemistry, such as arylsulfonyl and arylaminy radical species. We are further exploring the potential uses<sup>7</sup> of this chemistry, and will report on such work in future publications.

**Acknowledgements:** This work was supported by the Office of Naval Research. ESR spectra were obtained at the Department of Polymer Science and Engineering at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, on an IBM Instruments ESP-9 ESR spectrometer that was purchased with the aid of a grant from the International Business Machines Corporation. UV-visible spectra were obtained on a Shimadzu UV-260 purchased with the help of a

Research Corporation Grant. Some of these results were presented at the 197th American Chemical Society Meeting in Dallas, Texas on April 12, 1989.

#### REFERENCES

1. A. R. Forrester, J. M. Hay, R. M. Thomson, Chapter 7 of *Organic Chemistry of Stable Free Radicals*; Academic Press, New York, NY, 1968.
2. K. Haider, M. S. Platz, A. Despres, V. Lejeune, E. Migirdicyan, T. Bally, E. Haselbach, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, **110**, 2319(1988).
3. Phenols 1-3 were obtained from Aldrich Chemical Company and used without further purification. Phenol 4 was synthesized by the method of A. Rieker, P. Ziemek, *Z. Naturforsch.*, **206**, 640(1965) and gave satisfactory mp and spectral comparison to the literature references.
4. The AOC's were characterized by the following data. Their instability prevented distillation (of the oils) or consistent elemental analyses. Recrystallization of the solid AOC's was carried out in pentane at reduced temperature. In all cases, completeness of reaction was established by absence of the -OH band in the IR.
  - 5 -- mp 52-54 °C. IR(CCl<sub>4</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup>, C=O str): 1780, 1805(w, sh.)  
<sup>1</sup>HNMR(CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 80MHz): δ1.33(s,18), 1.34(s,9), 7.25(s,2)
  - 6 -- (yellow oil). IR(CHCl<sub>3</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup>, C=O str): 1740, 1790(w. sh.)  
<sup>1</sup>HNMR(CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 80MHz): δ1.25(s,18), 2.26(s,3), 6.94(s,2)
  - 7 -- mp 69-71 °C. IR(CHCl<sub>3</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup>, C=O str): 1750, 1780.  
<sup>1</sup>HNMR(CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 80MHz): δ1.26(s,18), 3.34(s,3), 6.89(s,2)
  - 8 -- (yellow oil) IR(CHCl<sub>3</sub>/cm<sup>-1</sup>, C=O str): 1760,1785.  
<sup>1</sup>HNMR(CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 80MHz): δ1.30(s,18), 7.2-7.7(m,7)
5. E. Muller *et al.*, *Just. Liebigs. Ann. der Chem.*, **645**, 1, 25, 53, 79(1961).
6. The observed qualitative UV-vis spectra of radicals 9-12 (Shimadzu UV-260, nm, in hexane) are: 9 (381, 400, 620[broad]), 10( 392, 413, 444), 11(384, 405, 540[broad]), 12(485, 532, 620[broad]).
7. During the preparation of this manuscript, we became aware of the recent use (independent of our work) of acid halides as photochemical sources of carbon-centered radicals. We thank Prof. Edwin Hilinski of Florida State University for advising us of this work in a private communication.